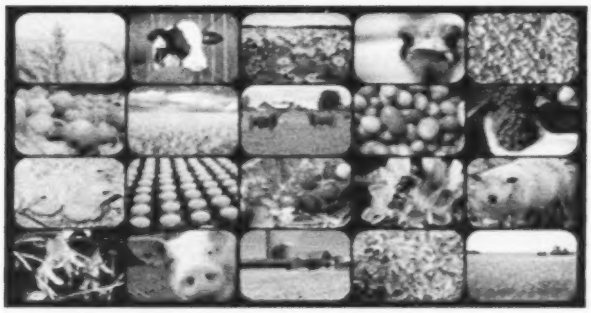
Catalogue no. 95-640-X

Quebec leads in dairy, maple, pigs, and fruits, berries and nuts



Release date: May 10, 2017

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Canada

How to obtain more information

For information about this product or the wide range of services and data available from Statistics Canada, visit our website, www.statcan.gc.ca.

You can also contact us by

email at STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca

telephone, from Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the following numbers:

- Statistical Information Service 1-800-263-1136
- National telecommunications device for the hearing impaired 1-800-363-7629
- Fax line 1-514-283-9350

Depository Services Program

- Inquiries line 1-800-635-7943
- Fax line 1-800-565-7757

Standards of service to the public

Statistics Canada is committed to serving its clients in a prompt, reliable and courteous manner. To this end, Statistics Canada has developed standards of service that its employees observe. To obtain a copy of these service standards, please contact Statistics Canada toll-free at 1-800-263-1136. The service standards are also published on www.statcan.gc.ca under "Contact us" > "Standards of service to the public."

Note of appreciation

Canada owes the success of its statistical system to a long-standing partnership between Statistics Canada, the citizens of Canada, its businesses, governments and other institutions. Accurate and timely statistical information could not be produced without their continued co-operation and goodwill.

Standard table symbols

The following symbols are used in Statistics Canada publications:

. not available for any reference period
.. not available for a specific reference period
... not applicable
0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
^{p} preliminary
^{r} revised
x suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
^{E} use with caution
F too unreliable to be published
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada

© Minister of Industry, 2017

All rights reserved. Use of this publication is governed by the Statistics Canada Open Licence Agreement.

An HTML version **is also available.**

Cette publication est aussi disponible en français.

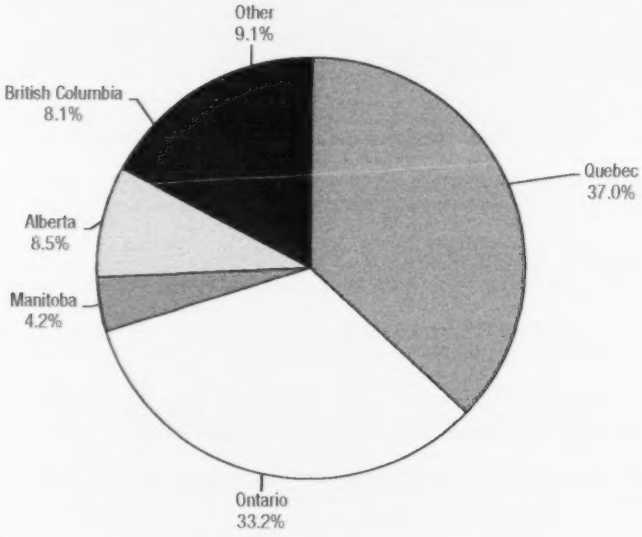
Quebec leads in dairy, maple, pigs, and fruits, berries and nuts

Dairy was the largest agricultural sector in Quebec in 2016 and the province remained a leader in national terms in the number of farms reporting dairy cows and the total number of dairy cows, despite declines in both categories since 2011.

Quebec also led the country in the number of pigs in 2016, accounting for one-third of all pigs in Canada. The number of pigs in Quebec were up 10% from five years earlier.

Corn for grain, soybeans and oats were the leading crops by area in 2016. Soybean area was up by one-quarter from 2011 and Quebec ranked third nationally in terms of area for soybeans and second in corn for grain.

Chart 1
Provincial distribution of dairy cows, 2016



Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.
Source: CANSIM table 004-0221.

Quebec has the largest blueberry, cranberry and total fruits, berries and nuts area in Canada, with cranberry area up by well over one-third from 2011.

Quebec also accounted for just over 90% of all maple taps in Canada in 2016.

Farm operators in Quebec were on average a bit older than in 2011 but they remained the youngest of any province.

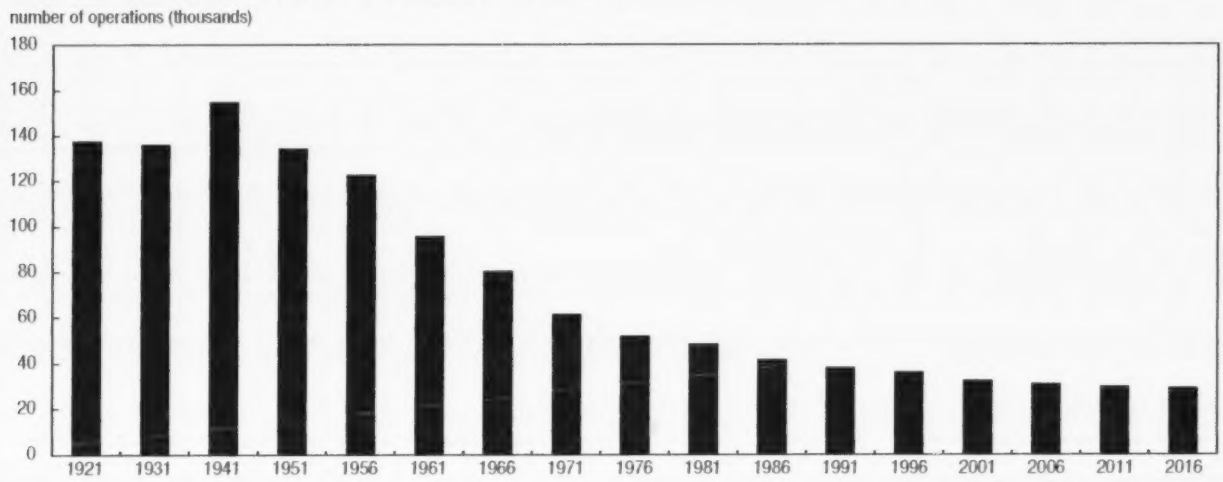
Primary agriculture represented 1.1% of provincial gross domestic product (agricultural GDP) in 2013. This percentage increased to 4.5% when agricultural input and service providers, primary producers, food and beverage processors, and food retailers and wholesalers industries were taken into account (Statistics Canada. 2013. Special tabulation, based on 2013 gross domestic product by industry – provincial and territorial).

Agricultural operations in Quebec employed 55,866 people in 2015.

The number of farms down slightly from 2011

The 2016 Census of Agriculture counted 28,919 census farms in Quebec, down 1.8% from 2011, a smaller decline than the national average of 5.9%.

Chart 2
Total number of agricultural operations, Quebec, 1921 to 2016



Sources: CANSIM tables 004-0002 and 004-0204.

More pigs but fewer dairy cows

Quebec had more pigs than any other province in 2016, accounting for almost one-third of all pigs in Canada. The number of pigs in Quebec increased 10.0% from 2011 to 4.5 million head in 2016, following a 3.7% decline from 2006 to 2011. The increase was attributable to better market conditions, which boosted the price of pigs relative to the period preceding the last census. At the time of the 2011 Census of Agriculture, the pig sector had been beset by high feed costs, disease, and low pig prices, resulting in significantly fewer farms and a smaller pig herd (CANSIM table 002-0068, accessed April 25, 2017).

Pig type farms accounted for $1.9 billion in gross farm receipts, making it the second largest agricultural industry in Quebec in terms of gross farm receipts.

The number of dairy cows in Quebec decreased 3.5% from 2011 to 347,038 head in 2016 and the number of farms reporting dairy cows declined 13.3%. Despite the decrease, Quebec still had the largest number of dairy cows and the largest number of farms reporting dairy cows in Canada. Dairy cattle and milk production type farms reported the highest gross farm receipts for any farm type in the province at $2.7 billion.

While there were fewer dairy cows, this was offset by increased production per animal, attributable to improved animal nutrition, genetics and production practices. Annual milk production increased 7.3% provincially to 3.1 billion litres from 2011 to 2016 (CANSIM table 003-0011, accessed April 25, 2017). Quebec had the highest number of farms with robotic milking technology.

The number of beef cattle in Quebec declined 18.0% from 2011 to 266,378 head in 2016, as some producers took the opportunity to sell stock and retire or focus on other aspects of agricultural production. The number of farms reporting beef cattle declined 14.7%.

The sheep flock was down 12.8% from 2011 to 237,623 animals in 2016.

Total farm area and cropland decline

The total farm area over which farmers had stewardship in Quebec decreased 1.9% from 2011 to 8.1 million acres in 2016. The average area per farm was stable at 280 acres in 2016, while the area of cropland edged down 0.4% to 4.6 million acres. There were shifts of area away from hay to field crops.

Total farm area, which is land owned or operated by an agricultural operation, includes:

- cropland;
- summerfallow;
- improved and unimproved pasture;
- woodlands and wetlands;
- all other land (including idle land, and land on which farm buildings are located).

Table 1
Components of cropland in percentage, Quebec, 2011 and 2016

	Percent of cropland[1]	
Component of cropland	**2011**	**2016**
Field crops	54.5	60.1
Hay	40.9	35.2
Vegetables	2.0	2.0
Fruits, berries and nuts	2.1	2.3
Sod and nursery	0.5	0.4
Total cropland	**100.0**	**100.0**

[1] Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding

Source: Census of Agriculture (3438).

Corn for grain is the leading crop

Corn for grain, soybeans and oats were the leading field crops by area reported in Quebec in 2016, unchanged from 2011. Quebec had the second largest corn for grain area in Canada behind Ontario, and the third largest soybean area. Soybean area in Quebec rose 26.9% from 2011, while nationally it was up 41.9%. Crop rotations of these crops offer environmental and agronomic benefits including boosting biodiversity and breaking pest cycles while also increasing nutrient utilization. This practice improves capital and labour utilization by staggering planting and harvest windows and helps to manage business risk by varying products and hedges against commodity specific environmental and disease pressures.

Overall, Quebec ranked fifth in terms of total field crop area in Canada.

Table 2
Largest three field crops, Quebec, 2011 and 2016

	Acreage	
Field crop	**2011**	**2016**
Corn for grain	994,454	980,588
Soybeans	684,837	869,123
Oats	255,984	208,665

Source: CANSIM table 004-0213.

Cranberries and blueberries lead the increase in fruits, berries and nuts area

The total area of land in fruits, berries and nuts rose 7.9% from 2011 to 104,414 acres in 2016, due in large part to increases in cranberries (39.3%) and blueberries (6.8%). Blueberries were the leading fruits, berries and nuts commodity in terms of area at 71,666 acres, followed by apples (12,791 acres) and cranberries (9,888 acres). Not only did Quebec report the largest blueberry and cranberry acreage in the country but it ranked first in total fruits, berries and nuts area in Canada.

Field vegetable area in Quebec declined 0.7% from 2011 to 92,431 acres in 2016. Sweet corn (18,030 acres), green peas (10,219 acres) and green and wax beans (9,276 acres) were the leading field vegetables by area in 2016.

Meanwhile, the area dedicated to greenhouse flower and vegetable production declined 5.8% to 25.2 million square feet, with most of the area under glass dedicated to flowers.

The total number of taps on maple trees in Quebec increased 4.7% to 42.5 million taps in 2016, accounting for 90.5% of all taps in Canada.

Quebec has the youngest farmers

There were 41,996 farm operators in Quebec in 2016, down 4.4% from 2011 and exceeding the decline in the number of farms (-1.8%).

Female operators accounted for over one quarter (26.1%) of all farm operators in Quebec, up from 25.9% five years earlier but below the national average of 28.7%.

The average age of farm operators in Quebec edged up from 51.4 years in 2011 to 52.9 years in 2016, but remained the youngest of any province.

Table 3
Proportion of farm operators by age group, Quebec, 2011 and 2016

	Percent of farm operators[1]	
Age group	**2011**	**2016**
Under 35 years old	10.9	9.8
35 to 54 years old	49.4	42.9
55 years and older	39.7	47.2
Total farm operators	**100.0**	**100.0**

[1] Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Source: CANSIM table 004-0239.

In 2015, 44.4% of farm operators in Quebec worked more than 40 hours a week on average on farm operations, compared with 49.0% in 2010. At the national level, this percentage was 37.5% in 2015.

Meanwhile, more farmers worked off the farm in 2015, with 36.3% of farm operators in Quebec reporting an off farm job compared with 35.6% in 2010, but still the lowest level in Canada. Nationally, 44.4% of farm operators worked off the farm.

Gross farm receipts and operating expenses grow

Gross farm receipts were $10.1 billion in 2015, while operating expenses were $8.5 billion. On average, for every dollar in sales, farms had 84 cents in operating expenses in 2015 for an expense-to-receipt ratio of 0.84. In 2010, the expense-to-receipt ratio in Quebec was 0.82.

The expense-to-receipt ratio varied by farm type. Operations typed as dairy and milk had the most favourable ratio (0.76) in 2015. However, they also reported the largest deterioration from five years earlier, rising 4 cents from 2010. The greatest improvement in ratios came from fruits, berries and nuts type operations which went from 0.84 to 0.80.

Farm types belonging to supply managed industries (dairy, poultry, egg and maple production) accounted for 41.6% of total gross farm receipts in Quebec, the highest proportion outside Atlantic Canada. Livestock farms overall were dominant in terms of gross farm receipts ($7.0 billion), accounting for 69.1% of total gross farm receipts in 2015.

The expense-to-receipt ratio is the average amount of operating expenses incurred for a dollar in farm receipts. The ratio is calculated in current dollars.

Price indices were used to obtain constant dollar estimates of receipts, expenditures and capital values in order to eliminate the impact of price changes in year-to-year comparison.

Census Day was May 10, 2016. Farmers were asked to report their receipts and expenses for the last complete fiscal or calendar year (2015).

Other agriculture highlights

- In 2016, 1.8% of farms in Quebec reported having renewable energy producing systems compared with 5.3% nationally.
- The 2016 Census of Agriculture marked the first time farm operators were asked to report whether they had a written succession plan. In 2016, 9.2% of farms in Quebec had a written succession plan, the highest proportion of farms reporting a succession plan in the country and well above the national average of 8.4%.
- The proportion of farms producing organic products in Quebec rose from 3.5% in 2011 to 4.4% in 2016. This was double the national average of 2.2%.
- In 2016, 13.8% of farms in Quebec reported using automated animal feeding technology, the highest proportion in Canada.
- In 2016, 18.9% of farms in Quebec reported selling agricultural products directly to consumers.
- In Quebec, the value of land and buildings per acre increased 52.8% (in 2016 constant dollars) from 2011 to $5,320 in 2016, almost double the national average of $2,696 per acre.

Canada 150: Farming in Quebec

Quebec was one of the original four provinces in Canada in 1867. In 1871, the first census after Confederation, the province had 118,086 farms and reported 406,542 dairy cattle and 371,452 pigs. By 1921, Quebec was reporting 85.3% of all maple taps in Canada (19.3 million maple taps). Today, Quebec continues to lead the country in maple production, with the number of maple taps more than doubling since 1921 to 42.5 million taps in 2016. Quebec also leads the country in milk production (CANSIM table 003-0011, accessed April 25, 2017) and total dairy herd. The number of pigs in the province has increased 12-fold since 1871, making Quebec the provincial leader in pig numbers in Canada.

Statistics Canada would like to thank the farming community of Quebec for their participation and assistance in the 2016 Census of Agriculture.

Census farm: An operation is considered a census farm (agricultural operation) if it produces at least one of the following products intended for sale:

- crops: hay, field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed;
- livestock: cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, game animals, other livestock;
- poultry: hens, chickens, turkeys, chicks, game birds, other poultry;
- animal products: milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat;
- other agricultural products: Christmas trees, sod, greenhouse or nursery products, mushrooms, honey or bees, maple syrup and its products.

The data for Yukon and the Northwest Territories are not included in the national totals because of the different definition of an agricultural operation in the territories and confidentiality constraints. The data for Yukon and the Northwest Territories are presented separately.

Farm type: Farm type is established through a procedure that classifies each census farm according to the predominant type of production. This is done by estimating the potential receipts from the inventories of crops and livestock reported on the questionnaire and determining the product or group of products that make up the majority of the estimated receipts. For example, a census farm with total potential receipts of 60% from hogs, 20% from beef cattle and 20% from wheat, would be classified as a hog and pig farm. The farm types presented in this document are derived based on the 2012 North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS).

P.T.O. hp (Power Take Off horsepower): The measure of the power available from a tractor engine to drive implements.

Gross farm receipts: The Census of Agriculture measures gross farm receipts for the calendar or accounting year prior to the census. Gross farm receipts (before deducting expenses) in this analysis include:

- receipts from all agricultural products sold;
- program payments and custom work receipts.

The following are not included in gross farm receipts:

- sales of forestry products (for example: firewood, pulpwood, logs, fence posts and pilings);
- sales of capital items (for example: quota, land, machinery);
- receipts from the sale of any goods purchased only for retail sales.

Total operating expenses: The Census of Agriculture measures operating expenses for the calendar or accounting year prior to the census. Total operating expenses include:

- any expense associated with producing agricultural products (such as the cost of seed, feed, fuel, fertilizers, etc.).

The following are not included in total operating expenses:

- the purchase of land, buildings or equipment;
- depreciation or capital cost allowance. Depreciation represents economic "wear and tear" expense. Capital cost allowance represents the amount of depreciation written off by the tax filer as allowed by tax regulations.

2010 to 2015: Some data refer to a reference period other than Census Day. For example, for financial data the reference period is the calendar or accounting (fiscal) year prior to the census.

Farm operator: According to the census, a farm operator is any person responsible for the management decisions made for an agricultural operation as of May 10, 2016.

Contact information

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).